

**From:** Wally  
**To:** Microsoft ATR  
**Date:** 11/21/01 2:02am  
**Subject:** Microsoft Settlement

Dear Folks at the Department of Justice,

I just watched a local newscaster read a story in the most incredulous manner about the latest in the Microsoft's dealing with the law. Even he couldn't believe what he was reading. The story was that Microsoft would agree to fund the 12,500 poorest schools with computers and software as "settlement in dozens of private antitrust suits." I can't believe it either. Here is a link to a CNN story about it:  
<http://money.cnn.com/2001/11/20/technology/microsoft/index.htm>

What are we doing, feeding our children to the monopolists?

I have to say that I was severely disappointed with the proposed antitrust settlement that came out in early November of this year. It seemed not even a slap on the wrist, but more a pat on the back.

Despite an incredible onslaught of money, resources, lawyers and political pressure, the basic judgement against Microsoft stood: They are guilty of monopolistic practices. Plain and simple. Nothing has changed that.

The Microsoft business plan of centralizing all services onto the Windows platform is easily understandable. They are a business operating in a capitalist system which rewards predatory and proprietary behavior. If all roads lead through Microsoft in the computer world, then Microsoft gets to extract its ounce of flesh from all of us and reap great profits. Great work if you can get it.

This business plan works wonderfully for Microsoft in terms of profit and longevity, but does it really serve the public? No. It isn't meant to. No matter what spin it is given.

What is good for the public? Certainly, having more than one operating system in general use is a must. Thank goodness a lot of web servers run UNIX/Apache or the whole internet would be brought down in a regular basis every time a new Microsoft email virus makes its rounds. This happens with increasing regularity. One monopolistic operating system becomes a very inviting target for plain idiots as well as true cyber terrorists.

One monopolistic operating system doesn't really foster innovation as well. If Microsoft only controlled the operating system arena, one could argue that innovation could flourish. However, Microsoft wants you to use their word processor, web browser, email client (I'm using Outlook Express at this

moment), spread sheet, database, et al. Where is there room for third party developers to flourish? How does one compete especially given the programming "hooks" that Microsoft has written into their operating system solely for the benefit of its own applications?

I work on the Internet. I build web sites and teach the same at Cabrillo College in Aptos, California. Although I haven't been in the computer business for that long, I have been happy that the Internet is an open environment that works for all computing platforms. HTML, the language that is used for web pages is a universal language. One should be able to view a web page using any web browser on the UNIX, Linux, Be, Solaris, Mac or Windows platform with equal success. This open environment promotes innovation. Microsoft would like to sew up the internet to only its platform. Earlier this month, the corporate Microsoft website couldn't be accessed except with the Microsoft browser and (I believe) a computer running Windows. They called it a glitch, I see it as a glimpse of the future. Not a very cheery one.

My expectations of you at the Department of Justice are very high. I expect you to treat these convicted monopolists as the criminals that they are under U.S. law and punish them accordingly. I understand that the current agreement is even easier on Microsoft than the one that Microsoft itself proposed last year.

Microsoft would have you believe that what is good for Microsoft is good for the economy and the country. The truth is that what is good for Microsoft is good for the Microsoft bottom line and not necessarily the rest of us.

I hate to say this, but the folks in Redmond Washington are laughing at the Department of Justice and the American public. They arrogantly and apparently correctly felt that could break the agreements they made in the antitrust suit in the mid 1990s with impunity. And so they have. Now, the current proposed agreement looks like candy in the eyes of a kid.

The reputation of the Department of Justice is on the line as well. Is the Department of Justice to be known as an arbiter of law, a protector of the American public, a sword in the hand of justice to smite down the enemies of our nation?

Or just another minion of big business.

Well folks, in a long winded way, you have found that I strongly disapprove of the proposed Microsoft Antitrust Settlement. I see it as a travesty of justice. It looks like a sell out by my government to a business and I find that extremely disturbing.

Thank you for your time.  
Regards,

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